

Communications Department

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##### **Jonesboro economy ranked strongest in South, Southwest**

The Jonesboro Metropolitan Statistical Area rates as the strongest of 84 metros in the South and Southwest, according to Area Development magazine.

The magazine, a trade publication serving those invested in economic, business planning and workforce development, based its rankings on data including gross metro product, employment change, population change and unemployment change.

It ranks Jonesboro No. 1, just ahead of Louisville, not to mention Dallas, Phoenix, Nashville, Austin, Fayetteville, Memphis and 77 other metro areas in the South and Southwest. Jonesboro scored so well largely because of the region’s low unemployment, goods-producing job growth and net employment growth.

“These are amazing numbers, and they are the result of the type of people we have in Jonesboro,” Mayor Harold Perrin said. “We have great companies with great employees doing great work.”

The numbers only serve to confirm other reports over the past 18 months that rank Jonesboro highly by various metrics. Headlight Data, an Avalanche Consulting product that serves economic and workforce development industries, ranks Craighead County among the top 11 percent of small U.S. counties in job growth (59th of 548).

In Arkansas, Craighead has ranked second among counties with “incoming investments,” according to SmartAsset, a financial technology company based in New York. Only Benton County was ranked ahead of Craighead.

SmartAsset’s rankings were based on businesses established over a three-year period; inflation-adjusted GDP growth, real estate growth, and federal funding received by each county in the form of contracts awarded to businesses.

“Jonesboro has long been a great place to do business. The recent reports give us proof that people outside of Jonesboro are taking notice,” said Mark Young, president of the Jonesboro Regional Chamber of Commerce and Jonesboro Unlimited. “To be ranked at the top of such important categories as workforce, investment and overall economic strength will give us one more asset to market Jonesboro as the destination for new and existing business to invest and thrive.”

Last year, Jonesboro rated well among peer cities in numerous independent studies. The city was ranked No. 1 in Arkansas for success in 2017 by gobankingrates.com, No. 2 in the state to find a job by zippia.com, No. 5 in the nation among best places to retire, No. 7 in the nation and No. 1 in the state for working parents, and among the top 50 places in America to build a forever dream home.

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